EASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Spring 2026 **Volume 27, Issue 1**

Spring/Maybe

This recent storm (Sunday-Monday 2/22-2/23) is the closest we've come to the Bizzard of '78. I believe Easton's final total was 31". There are several differences between 1978 and 2026. Forecasting has improved due to new technologies. We are more prepared for large storms now as we are better informed ahead of time. We have cell phones, so much easier to be in touch with loved ones. And, due in part to '78 catching us off guard, we swarm the supermarkets well ahead of time, stocking up on items needed and items not needed. Yet still, this storm stranded people at work or made it difficult or impossible for essential workers to get where they needed to be. Some Easton residents lost power but most of us did not. There is nothing worse than being cold and stranded. Some struggled to get to important medical appointments and many elderly needed help to be plowed out, while plow drivers were busy clearing the roads. Easton did an amazing job of responding to Mother Nature's best. Although meteorologists are better at forecasting and towns quicker at responding there is no denying the powerful forces of nature as the wind and snow howled and swirled outside our doors. And the snow kept falling, inches accumulating in a very short time. School was cancelled for 3 days. Nevertheless, Spring is around the corner. Snowdrops and crocuses are hiding under the snowdrifts biding their time. We just need to be patient.

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH *and the Historical Society will be celebrating with an Open House dedicated to Easton women. Many strong women have contributed to Easton's history in various ways. Some we have celebrated before, for example Anna C. Ames, who was the subject of last month's Open House. Not all are as well-known. The documentary "Faces of Women" focuses on some of Easton's women who have achieved something of note. The film is dedicated to Hazel Luke Varella, outstanding educator, historian, leader, and more. Please join us on March 22nd for the first public viewing.*

CALENDAR

Friday, March 20, Spring begins

Sunday, March 22, Open House, Celebration of Women's History Month featuring, "Faces of Women" documentary, Topic: Women's Contributions to Easton's History, 12:30-4:30

Wednesday, April 1, Passover begins at sundown

Sunday, April 5, Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 19, Open House, Battle of Dorchester Heights

Wednesday, April 22, Earth Day

Sunday, May 10, Mother's Day

Sunday, May 17, Open House, TBD

Monday, May 25, Memorial Day

Sunday, June 14, Open House, features the Declaration of Independence

Friday, June 19, Juneteenth

Sunday, June 21, Father's Day

Saturday, July 4, Independence Day

The mission of the Easton Historical Society and Museum is to preserve, promote and interpret the unique industrial, social, cultural, architectural and environmental history of the Town.

Museum News

Project and Renovation Updates:

The old school bell has been relocated to the museum garden. Our goal is to have the garden ready for a grand opening in May. Pillars clad in Boston Stone will be placed in the garden and a metal archway is being planned as a future project.

Items are being moved from upstairs into the renovated basement. More storage racks and volunteers are needed to assist in this project.

Two projects are underway to document the museum's collections. We have upgraded our Catalogit package and some directors and volunteers have been trained in the procedure by Steve Anderson and work is underway. There is a lightbox setup along with a scanner to enhance photographs taken. Jon is teaching volunteers how to use our new scanning machine.

Events and Recaps:

Our December Open House was a success with many holiday sales. The December 27th Gala was hugely successful, over 650 people attended. Congressman Lynch made an appearance.

At our January 18th Open House appreciation was expressed for outgoing President Ken Michel, who has done an exceptional job of advancing the Society's and Museum's mission during his tenure. Thank you Ken!

We look forward to seeing where Acting President Jon Coe's leadership will take us.

Reminder: The second book by Jonathan Coe, along with Edmund Hands, is a wonderful gift idea for anyone with fond memories of Frothingham Park, or a gift to yourself. It is a sweeping look through the decades, from when the park was just an idea of Mrs. Frothingham's until present day, this coffee table book will not disappoint. Available at just $40, all proceeds go the support the Easton Historical Society and Museum. The book includes dozens of historical photos along with Jon Coe's own beautiful photography.

Look for a future update on a "Chowder & Chatter" to be held this spring at The Residence.

Our website has been updated and improved by Director Steve Anderson. It is easier to navigate and new members can join online. Memberships can also be renewed this way. We have Student (free), Individual ($20), Family ($30), Senior ($10), and Corporate ($200), Sustainer ($250) and Lifetime memberships (one time payment $500) available.

The Easton Historical Society Newsletter
is published quarterly by the Easton Historical Society and Museum.

Officers

Interim President Jonathan Coe
1st Vice President David Ames, Jr.
Treasurer Nancy DeLuca

Directors

Ken Michel
Joanne England
Debra Salisbury
Steve Anderson
Virginia Murray
Timothy Hurley

Staff Writer— Anne Wooster Drury
Research Advisor– Paul Berry

Thomas Paine's Common Sense, January 18

The pamphlet Common Sense popularized the idea of the colonies breaking from England. Published in 1776 by "an Englishman" , 120,000 copies sold in the first three months. Thomas Paine's plain speech appealed to Americans feeling unhappy with British rule. At the Open House two short video clips were shown and society directors and volunteers read key parts of the document aloud.

After the presentation Interim President Jonathan Coe and Director Ginny Murray applauded outgoing President Ken Michel for his long term leadership, his philanthropy, humility, and public service. Ken was gifted a large photograph of the railroad station along with a photograph of the weathervane on top of the station. Beautiful photos by Jon Coe. A cake was served along with other refreshments.

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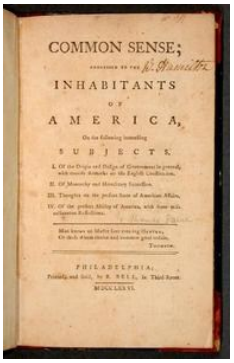
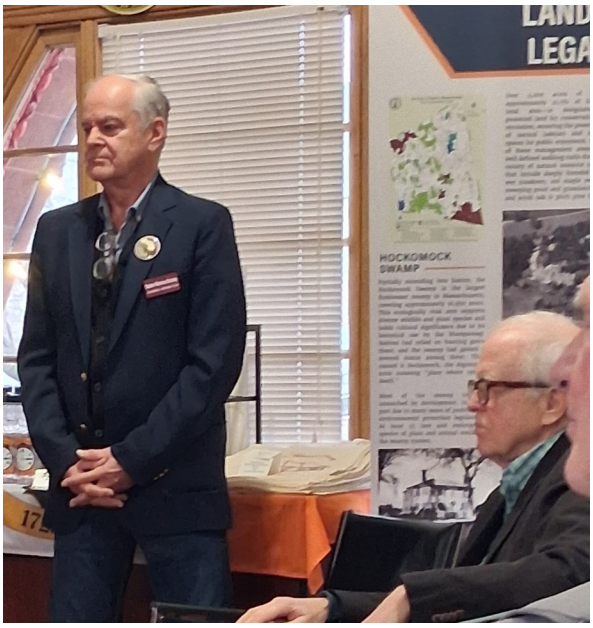

COMMON SENSE;
INHABITANTS
OF
AMERICA,
SUBJECTS.
PHILADELPHIA,

"The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind." Thomas Paine

Pictured: Ken Michel, Ginny Murray, Jon Coe. Seated, David Ames



"Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one;…." Thomas Paine

VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are essential to our ability to keep the Museum open. Most days, except Monday and Sunday (unless there is an Open House), the station is open. Look for the OPEN flag outside! Below are a few of our volunteers. Look to meet more volunteers in future Quarterlies.

Pictured left, Ron Wood has always lived in Easton, much of the time in the same neighborhood. At OA he participated in track, played football and basketball. Ron knows Easton and he is great fun to talk to. Bonnie Porter-Meglio, right, also grew up in North Easton and after leaving for a time, returned to raise her family. Bonnie taught mathematics at both Easton Junior High and Oliver Ames High School. In high school she managed the girl's basketball team. Both Ron and Bonnie love to reminisce about growing up in Easton.

Ken and Dianne Sterling are quite expert on the Revolutionary War era. They are members of the SAR and DAR respectively- Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution. They have been known to dress in costume!

Right is Ken England, husband of Director Joanne England. While not an 'official' volunteer, Ken makes sure every Open House goes smoothly and graciously oversees the coffee station.

Below: Recent photos from the Town of Easton website. The town did a great job of clearing up from the Blizzard of 2026.

A YEAR OF OPEN HOUSES

Here is a complete list of Open Houses for 2026:

January, Sunday 18th
Thomas Paine. The author of "Common Sense" had a great impact on the course of the American Revolution.
February, Sunday 22nd
Anna C. Ames. Anna C. Ames championed music education, funded the Ames gymnasium, and supported women's suffrage.
March, **Sunday 22nd**
The March Open House will focus on Women's History Month with the premiere showing of "Faces of Women", a new documentary by Anne Wooster Drury and Robert Holmes. The film details many strong and notable women of Easton, including some you will know and some you may not.
April, Sunday 19th
Battle of Dorchester Heights. This battle was a decisive event in the early days of the American Revolution that ended the siege if Boston and caused the British to withdraw from the city.
May, Sunday 17th
TBD
June, Sunday 14th
The June Open House will focus on the Declaration of Independence, Current plans include a filmed reading of the Declaration by a fifth grade class.
July
There is no July Open House.
August, Sunday 16th
The August Open House is our annual cookout for all members and we welcome potential members. Always a good time.
September, Sunday 20th
September's Open House will focus on the Easton Huskies!
October, Sunday 18th
The Open House in October will focus on the history of cameras with a special viewing of photos taken with the Eastman #1 box camera owned by Winthrop Ames. We are adding donations to our collection at this time. Please reach out if you have something of interest. This will be an amazing Open House.
November, Sunday 15th
This will be our annual Veteran's Day event. We honor our veteran's and invite some to speak. This is always a moving event.
December, Sunday 13th
Annual gift sale Open House.

A LOOK BACK TO MARCH 1968

Many Easton residents still remember the storm that caused the dam at Flyaway Pond to break, causing water to rush all the way to Main Street, throwing fish in the air, breaking through strong walls and causing much disruption. In North Easton.

Mayors Dispute Cherry Sheet Figures--Page 16

The Boston Globe

MORNING EDITION

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 1968

Next 72 Hours Critical in Mass. Flood Threat

Charles River Perils Towns Along Banks

The Nashua Due to Crest This Morning

The Neponset Likely to Rise Until Friday

SHATTERED EASTON DAM—Concrete blocks lie scattered after Monday night collapse of a Flyaway Pond wall and dam. Swath cut by the raging water is about 100 feet wide. Easton officials met Tuesday in emergency session. Story on Page 11. (Phil Preston Photo)

Anna C. Ames 1839-1917

The Open House was scheduled for the day of the impending storm (2/22) and we were happily surprised by great attendance. Four presenters discussed various parts of Anna C. Ames' life, from her birth into a poor family on the island of Nantucket, the death of her parents, adoption by the wealthy Hadwen family, her marriage to Oliver Ames, and her later philanthropic acts that greatly benefitted the town of Easton. Speakers were Anne Drury, Jon Coe, Ginny Murray and Bonnie Porter.

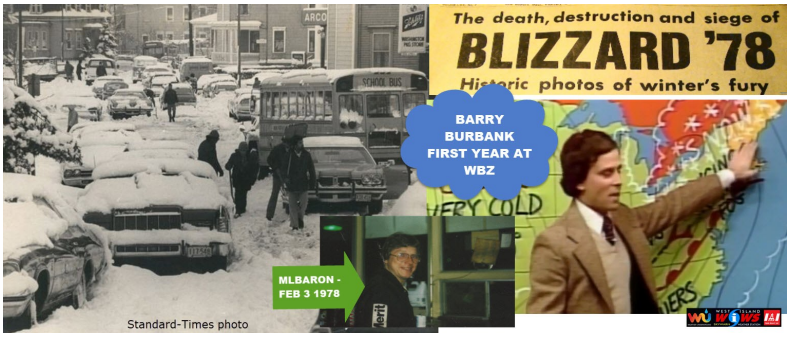
Mrs. Ames was a huge proponent of physical fitness, for both boys and girls, and insisted that girls could play on sports teams also, even bringing a doctor in from Boston to document the effects of exercise on women's bodies, confirming they could safely play. She herself attended all home games of the championship Easton Girl's Basketball team. It was Mrs. Ames who built the gym on Barrows Street for the new Oliver Ames High School. Music was another of her passions and the Anna C. Ames Band was the result. The band was popular locally and some of the young members went on to become professional musicians. Anna C. Ames believed that charity should be practiced 'close to home' and her actions proved her words. Every year she chose one or two young people whose post-high school education she funded. In 1916 when the Massachusetts militia was mobilized on the border with Mexico she quickly organized a Red Cross branch that made bandages and surgical supplies. She was a great philanthropist.

Refreshments served at the Open House included cookies made with recipes from the Anna C. Ames Cookbook. The ginger snaps and molasses cookies were delicious. Interestingly, the cookbook included recipes for cold cream and cough syrup. All in all, it was a nice afternoon.

A Look back at another massive storm. The infamous Blizzard of 1978.

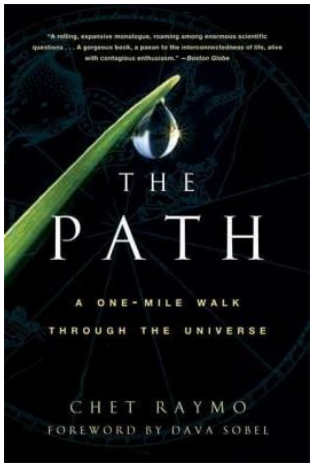
Two views of Main Street after the Blizzard of '78. One looking south and one north.

Barry Burbank was s a well-known meteorologist with decades of experience forecasting in Boston. He worked at WBZ-TV and was known for his engaging personality. Here he is is (right) during the Blizzard of 1978. Burbank retired in 2020 after 42 years.


The death, destruction and siege of
BLIZZARD '78
Historic photos of winter's fury
BARRY BURBANK FIRST YEAR AT WBZ
MLBARON - FEB 3 1978
Standard-Times photo

IN MEMORIAM

Chet Raymo, beloved husband, father, writer, teacher, and interpreter of the natural world, died peacefully in his sleep at the **age of 89 on January 25**. "For decades, Raymo stood at the rare crossroads of science and the humanities, inviting generations of readers to look up at the night sky, and down at the Earth beneath their feet, with wonder, humility, and care." Raymo wrote a dozen books, including The Path, a book about his walks through North Easton. He received the Lannan Literary Award in 1998.
Chester Raymo was born on September 17, 1936, in Chattanooga, TN. He trained as a physicist and astronomer and dedicated his professional life to teaching and scholarship, spending his entire career as a professor at Stonehill College. Raymo was known as author of The Boston Globe's column Science Musings, which ran for more than two decades.
Chet Raymo is survived by his wife of 67 years, Maureen; his children, Maureen, and her partner Ray, Dan, and his wife Patty, Margaret, and her husband Mark, and Thomas, and his wife Jodi; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his sisters Anne Raymo, Susan McGrath, Peggy Pejeau, and Jinx Commito. Donations may be made to the Natural Resources Trust of Easton.


"A rolling, expansive monologue, roaming among enormous scientific questions . . . A gorgeous book, a paean to the interconnectedness of life, alive with contagious enthusiasm." —Boston Globe
THE
PATH
A ONE-MILE WALK
THROUGH THE UNIVERSE
CHET RAYMO
FOREWORD BY DAVA SOBEL

"The purple loosestrife beside the stream emigrated from Europe in the 1800s as a garden ornamental, then went wantonly native in a land of wild frontiers...I have attended to all of these stories and tried to hear what the landscape has to say. I have attended, too, to language. How did the wood anemone and Sheep Pasture get their names? What does the queset of Queset Brook signify in the language of Native Americans? Scratch a name in a landscape and history bubbles up like a spring." From The Path by Easton resident Chet Raymo.
The book is a series of reflections by the Stonehill professor as he walked the one mile from his home in North Easton village to the Stonehill campus. Beautifully and thoughtfully written, it explores our interconnectedness with nature.

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Donations

The Tinkham family has donated a collection of historic postcards of Easton. Donna Andrews has donated four vintage cameras. The Ames families of Oliver, Minnie, Sam and Abby have donated three vintage cameras. Frank Meninno has donated a collection of papers related to Hazel Varella. Financial donations have been received from Fred Almquist, Debra Salisbury, Phyllis Johnson Whitty, Rachel Rhodes, Donald Almeida, James Carlino, Patricia Conley, John Gunning, Maura Tyrrell, Jay Wickersham, David Ames, Kristina McGill, William Morse, Michele and Roger Blake, and Courtney Palm.
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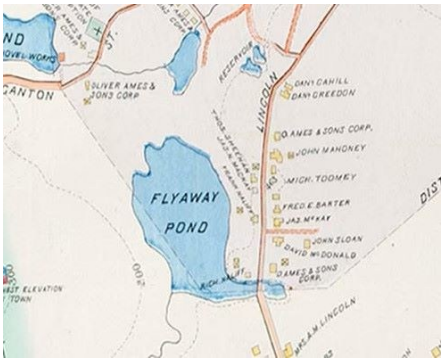
…….more March 13, 1968



In March of 1968, Flyaway Pond flew away. There was a breach of the dam after heavy rains; the dam broke and tumbled a short distance to where it still sits today. The dam, built by the Ames Company in 1845, created the 50 acre pond, which harnessed needed water power for the growing Company. (Map 1895).
"Shortly after 5:30 pm, (*3/18/1968*) a large section of Flyaway Dam collapsed, unleashing an estimated 350,000 tons of water on North Easton. The burst of water uprooted trees, washed away cars, overturned two loaded freight cars and damaged houses." Ed Hands, Easton's Neighborhoods.

March is Women's History Month. Women's History Month is a dedicated month to reflect on the often-overlooked contributions of women to U.S. history. Many women have contributed to Easton's history and are currently contributing to our present and our future. March's Open House will focus on just this, illustrating women's role from our town's early days to the recent past. The documentary "Faces of Women" will be shown Sunday, March 22nd. Come learn about women's contributions, some known, some maybe not. Presentation will begin at 1:00. The film runs an hour and fifteen minutes.

"For most of history, Anonymous was a woman." Virginia Woolf

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